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Board of Trade, Department of Science and Art.

CATALOGUE

OF A

COLLECTION OF MODELS IN WAX
AND TERRA COTTA,

BY VARIOUS ANCIENT ITALIAN MASTERS,

KNOWN AS

THE GHERARDINI COLLECTION,

NOW BEING EXHIBITED AT THE

MUSEUM OF ORNAMENTAL ART,

AT MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

MARCH 1854.



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CATALOGUE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Collection of Models herein described has been for a very long period in the possession of the Gherardini, an ancient family of Florence. Full particulars of their discovery by the present possessor, a member of that family, will be found in a report by Mr. Dyce, R.A., and Mr. Herbert, R.A., which is appended to this catalogue. A collection of drawings found at the same time was purchased by the Austrian government, and the models are now offered for sale to Her Majesty's government for the sum of 3,000*l*. These latter excited great interest in Florence at the period of their discovery, and a document on their authenticity, by the leading artists of the academy of that city, is appended to the "*Catalogue Raisonné*," in the possession of the proprietor. The models are now to be publicly exhibited for the period of one month from this date, with the view of eliciting from the public and the artists of this country such an expression of opinion, as to their value and authenticity, as will justify the purchase or the rejection of the collection by Her Majesty's government. The proprietor has however reserved the right to accept any higher offer that may be made to her during this period, subject to a prior right of refusal on the part of the government to the advanced terms.

The collection consists mainly of figures, groups, &c. in wax and terra cotta, presumed in every case to be original preparatory sketches, or studies, by the great artists whose names are attached to them, and not after-copies from their completed works. They are all more or less mutilated, partly owing to their fragility, and the perishable nature of the materials, and partly from the evident and long continued neglect which they have suffered; whilst, in some instances, they have a fragmentary appearance, from the models themselves never having been completed, being simply essays, or rapid embodiments of the original motives or ideas of great works ever present and expanding in the artist's mind.



Supposing these models to be really what they are represented to be, they would have claims to consideration in the following points of view :—First, the models attributed to Michelangiolo and Raffaello (the other objects being of comparatively little importance, and needing no illustration,) are thought to display much of that elevation of style and intrinsic beauty which have immortalized the recognised works of these great men; secondly, several of them are held to have a particular value, as being reminiscences of designs projected only, and never actually executed, such as the Hercules and Cacus, or as in the case of the Apollo, the Victory, and also of the Slave, intended for the monument of Pope Julius II.—of works left in an unfinished state, and from which these sketches exhibit interesting deviations, or as in the David, which is presumed to show the germ or first thought of one of the most renowned productions of the artist; whilst the anatomical studies afford actual evidence in confirmation of the peculiar mode of study which Michelangiolo is reputed to have followed; and, lastly, because these models, if authentic, are unique in their way, being deemed to be the only examples of such studies in the round by Michelangiolo now extant.

There is some probability that the Jonah is an original model by the hand of Raffaello, and if so, it is the only known specimen of sculpture by that great painter.

The descriptions of the several objects which follow are translated from the Italian manuscript catalogue, in the possession of Madame Gherardini.

J. C. ROBINSON.

*Marlborough House,
14th March 1854.*

CATALOGUE of MODELS in TERRA COTTA and in WAX, by certain celebrated ancient Masters, which have been preserved by the family Gherardini, of Florence.

SECTION FIRST.

MICHELANGIOLO BUONARROTI.

No. 1. *Terra Cotta model in the round*, 16 inches long, the right foot wanting.

A recumbent nude figure of a female supporting herself on the right elbow, and in the act of raising the left arm to hold a mantle, which is falling from the back of her head. This figure appears to be one of the numerous essays, which Michelangiolo made, particularly in Carrara, where he procured the marble for the tombs of the Medici family, in the church of San Lorenzo. The figure which he executed in marble preserves the same attitude, only it is better adapted to the pediment upon which it is placed. On due consideration this model has all the appearance of having been a study made from the life.

No. 2. *A Hand in Terra Cotta*, in the round, 9 inches high.

This hand had long been celebrated and studied by artists, the plaster cast being well known, whilst the original was believed to be lost. This being now fortunately discovered, in a better state of preservation than any of the known casts, excites the admiration of all artists and connoisseurs.

No. 3. *Group of Hercules and Cacus*. A model in terra cotta, 14 inches high.

This group was designed by Michelangiolo, as a *pendant* to his "David," and was intended to be placed on the other side of the gate of the Palazzo Vecchio, the position now occupied by the group of the same subject by Bandinelli.

We learn from Vasari, that Buonarroto made various designs and models with this view, but in vain, for Clement VII., who succeeded to Leo. X., and who could not love a man so full of patriotism as was the divine sculptor, gave the commission to the envious rival of Buonarroto, whose work, however, ill endures the comparison.

No. 4. "*Telamone*."—A small sketch, ("Bozzetto,") in wax, 6 inches high.

One of the "Prisoners," destined to support the tomb of Julius II., according to the grandiose design made by Michelangiolo, but which was never executed. The "terrible style" of this exalted genius manifests itself in every touch of this fine little model.

No. 5. *David*.—Small sketch in wax, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. The arms wanting.

The first idea of the *David*, executed by Michelangiolo, for the Gonfaloniere Soderini, now at the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio. This first conception is a perfect gem; besides its bold and truly masterly execution, it is highly valuable as showing what would have been the idea adopted by Buonarroti, had he been entirely free to regulate the *pose* of his figure, instead of being obliged to adapt it to the block of marble left in an imperfect and deteriorated state by a certain Simone da Fiesole. In this little model, the slayer of Goliah has a more vigorous action than in the marble; ("*più slanciato che nel marmo*") at his feet is the head of the Philistine. This exactly corresponds with a drawing with the pen by Michelangiolo, formerly in the possession of Marriette, who cites it in the notes to his life of the great artist.

No. 6. *Apollo*.—Small sketch in wax, 9 inches high, the left arm and the right leg from the knee to the foot wanting.

This is the motive upon which Michaelangiolo sculptured the celebrated Apollo, intended to conciliate Baccio Valori, then governor of Florence, who was irritated against him for having advocated resistance at the time of the siege. As Valori was soon out of favour, the sculptor left the statue unfinished, and after having been lost for many years it has been recently discovered, and is now placed in the Statue Gallery in Florence. On comparing the two we may see that in many parts this little sketch is more finished than the marble itself.

No. 7. *Victory*.—Small sketch of a group in wax, $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches high.

The right arm of the female figure is wanting. By the bold and animated execution, by the robust yet not exaggerated grandeur of the forms, there can be no doubt but that this figure of Victory trampling upon a slave is from the hand of the painter of the Sistine Chapel. This group was

afterwards executed in marble for the tomb of Pope Julius II., and is now in the great saloon of the Palazzo Vecchio.

No. 8. *Torso of a Female in Wax.*

This is a fragment of a design never wrought out, of which nothing remains but the torse and the thighs down to the knees. It evidently displays the energy of the artist, who sought to reproduce nature as she commonly exists, before adding those idealised forms which he would have desired.

No. 9. *Mask in Terra Cotta*, three inches high.

A mask which exhibits, though in small dimensions, the admirable power ("*bravura*") of Michelangiolo in wild and fantastic subjects.

No. 10. *Marsyas (?) flayed*.—A model in wax, six inches high, wanting an arm.

A figure thought to represent Marsyas flayed, model of a similar one in bronze, in the Gallery of Statues, believed to be the work of Michelangiolo. It is proper to say, nevertheless, that this wax model is vastly superior in merit to the bronze in question.

No. 11. *Five pieces, anatomical studies in wax :*

1. A right arm, nine inches long.
2. Another right arm, eight inches long.
3. A right leg, nine and a half inches long.
4. A left leg, eight and a half inches long.
5. Another left leg bent, six and a half inches long.

In some of these may be recognized the preparatory studies for the pendent arm of the David, and of the thigh and leg on which the weight of the figure rests; all, however, are modelled with great skill and intelligence, and they may be referred to the time when he studied anatomy, availing himself of the opportunities and the protection afforded him by the Prior of the Monastery of Santo Spirito.

N.B.—No. 5 is recognized as being a study for one of the legs of the dead Christ, executed in marble in the Cathedral of Florence.

No. 12. *Skeleton, in Wax*, sixteen and a half inches in height, the left arm wanting.

This model of a skeleton, the torse of which he had begun to clothe with the muscles, is somewhat damaged; it appears to be one of the preparatory studies, which Michelangiolo was accustomed to make before the commencement of a work.

SECTION II.

DONATELLO.

No. 13. *A cow in Terra Cotta.*

A cow lying down, a highly finished model by Donatello. The simplicity and naturalness of the pose, the knowledge with which the torsion of the muscles and every detail of the animal is given, and its exquisite execution, render this model a real masterpiece.

SECTION III.

GIOVANNI DI BOLOGNA.

No. 14. *Diana*, terra cotta in the round, nine inches high.

A nude figure of Diana in a crouching position, in the act of drying herself as if just after bathing. A carefully finished model, which displays all the skill of that celebrated sculptor.

No. 15. *The Sabines*.—Sketch in wax, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

Fragment of a small model of the so-called "Rape of the Sabines" by Gio. Bologna. It presents some variations when compared with the beautiful group which he executed in marble, and which is now to be seen under the arcade of the Loggia of Orcagna, in the Piazza del Gran Duca.

No. 16. *Hercules with the Centaur*.—Sketch in wax, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

Another portion of a sketch by the same celebrated statuary, representing a first conception of the other group of Hercules slaying Nessus, now placed under the same Loggia, and a most renowned work.

SECTION IV. (Various Authors.)

RAFFAELLE D'URBINO.

No. 17. *Jonah*.—Model in terra cotta, for the statue in marble in the Chigi Chapel, in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.

The anonymous author of the Life of Raphael, written before that of Vasari, and consequently only a few years

after the death of the illustrious painter of Urbino, was the first to speak of this model of the statue of Jonah by Raphael, which was afterwards executed in marble by the Florentine sculptor, Lorenzotto. The following are the textual words of that author :—"He worked also in sculpture, and executed some statues; I have seen one in the hands of Giulio Pippi (Giulio Romano, pupil and heir of Raphael), which represents a child; the model of Jonah, which is in the Church del Popolo, is equally by him."

See unedited *Life of Raphael d'Urbino*, illustrated with notes by Angelo Comolli, Rome, 1790, pages 76, 77.

No. 18. "*Architecture*."—Model in terra cotta, 12 inches high, left arm wanting.

Model of the statue representing Architecture upon the monument of Michelangiolo, in the church of Santo Croce, sculptured, either by Lorenzi or Giovanni dell'Opera, it is not certain which. However it is by one of that school, the members of which vied with each other in honouring the memory of their master.

No. 19. *Monumental Figure*.—Terra cotta, 15 inches high, male figure, recumbent on the ground in an academic attitude, which probably was accompanied by a corresponding female figure as a *pendant*, that both might serve for architectural ornaments, as is inferred from various similar examples. The style is that of the school of Michelangiolo, but without more certain data it is impossible to ascertain decidedly by whom it was modelled. However, it displays much merit, and will serve as a fine illustration of that school.

DUQUESNOY, called IL FIAMMINGO.

No. 20. *Santa Martina*.—Sketch in wax, 4 inches high.

This conception, although fine, was afterwards very differently executed, and is admired in Rome, in the church dedicated to the Virgin of Loreto, in Trajan's Forum; this statue is generally regarded as the sculptor's masterpiece, and this little model manifests all the spirit of its author.

No. 21. *Child in terra cotta*, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high.

Small model representing a child with a book in his hand; the legs mutilated, but in what remains there is the natural style, and it is easy to trace the well-known skill of Francesco Duquesnoy, called *Il Fiammingo*.

No. 22. *Fragment of a model of an Angel or Amorino in wax.*

A little child by the same renowned artist. Although wanting the head, feet, and arms, it is nevertheless very valuable, so fleshy is it, so true and graceful in the movement. On the shoulders may be seen the marks of the wings, so that it is thought to be the model of one of the many little angels, which this most skilful artist executed so admirably as to rival in marble the incarnations of the magic pencil of Titian in the sister art.

No. 23. *Nativity.*—Bas-relief in wax, 9 inches wide, 7 inches high.

This composition of the birth of the Redeemer, though in a more modern style than the others, is nevertheless not devoid of a certain merit, and being found in this collection it is most likely to have been the model of a work of some celebrated artist, since the collector of these ancient works, whoever he might be, was not deficient in knowledge, but on the contrary, sought out all that was rare and meritorious.

No. 24. *Ganymede.*—Medallion in bronze, 3 inches long. This relieve of Ganymede carried off by the eagle, is derived from a well-known design by Buonarotti, reproduced in ancient engravings on copper. The accuracy with which the present medallion is executed, and the artistic knowledge displayed, induce the belief that it was the work of Valerio Vicentino, or some other contemporary artist.

N.B. There are added two little sketches, one of a Madonna, and the other of a kneeling friar, the latter much mutilated; both display a good style, but it is not easy to attribute them to any particular artist of note. Moreover there is a sketch of one of the Caricatura Statues of the Boboli Gardens; and lastly, a basso relieve sketch representing the Rape of the Sabines, attributed to Giovanni di Bologna.

N.B. The figure of a friar kneeling is now found to be the model of the statue of St. Luke, by Giovanni di Bologna, now in one of the niches of the church of San Michele in Florence.

EXTRACTS from a REPORT made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Gherardini Collection of Models, by Mr. Dyce, R.A., and Mr. Herbert, R.A.

THE existence of this collection was unknown till a few years ago. Along with a large collection of drawings by ancient Italian masters (recently purchased by the Austrian Government), it remained at Florence, in the hands of a member of the Gherardini family, an aged priest, who appears either to have undervalued it or to have forgotten its existence; and it was not until some time after his death, when his effects were inherited by Signor Gherardini, to whom the collection now belongs, that it was discovered in an obscure corner of his relative's house, where it had long lain neglected.

The collection seems to have excited much interest in Florence when it was brought to light; and it would probably have been purchased by the Tuscan Government, had the price put upon it by Signor Gherardini been more moderate. The leading artists of Florence appear to have entertained no doubt of the genuineness of, at least, the most important objects of which it consists. A catalogue raisonné in the possession of Madame Gherardini (which we have seen), is subscribed by a number of distinguished painters and sculptors (members of the Academy of Florence and others), whose subscriptions are for the most part formally attested, and who declare that the works subscribed in the preceding catalogue are, in their opinion, what they profess to be.

The Tuscan Government having declined to purchase the collection, Signor Gherardini was advised by Prince Poniatowsky to offer it for sale to the French Government; and the Prince took an opportunity of bringing it under the notice of the Emperor. The collection was accordingly removed to Paris by Madame Gherardini; but its arrival having taken place immediately after the expenditure of an unusually large sum on the occasion of the sale of the Soult collection of pictures, the French Government (as we have been given to understand) simply declined, for reasons of economy, to entertain, at least for the time, any question of the purchase of the Gherardini models.

It does not appear that the failure or postponement of the negotiation was in the least owing to any unfavourable judgment on the merits of the collection, which, so far as we can learn, has been universally deemed to be, in its way, of

great interest and value. Its value indeed has been greatly enhanced since its removal to Paris. One of the models, a terra cotta, the authorship of which was left undecided by the Italian artists, and by way of conjecture only attributed to Sansovino, has, by common consent in Paris, been assigned to Raffaello, and considered to be the original model for the statue of the prophet Jonah, executed by Lorenzotto, for the Chigi chapel in the church of S. M. del Popolo, in Rome.

The following is a list of the objects of which the collection consists :—

I. WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO MICHAEL ANGELO.

1. Terra cotta model, 16 inches in length, of the recumbent figure termed "La Notte" on the monument of L. de' Medici.
2. A hand in terra cotta, rather above the size of life, supposed to be the original from which the cast still to be found in the shops of Italian formatori has been taken at some former time.
3. Group of "Hercules and Cacus," in wax, 14 inches in height, said to have been intended by Michael Angelo for one of the sides of the gate of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence, now occupied by the group by Bandinelli. Vasari mentions the circumstance that Michael Angelo made various designs and models with that view, but that the commission was ultimately given to Bandinelli by Clement VII.
4. Study in wax, 6 inches in height, for one of the slaves destined for the tomb of Julius the Second. The statue in marble exists in an unfinished state.
5. "David," size, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. First sketch in wax for the statue executed for the Gonfaloniere Soderini, out of a piece of marble previously worked on by Simone de Fiesole.
6. "Apollo." A model in wax, 9 inches in height. Design for a statue, which has been recently discovered in a less advanced state than the model, and which now exists in the statue gallery at Florence.
7. Sketch of two figures in wax, $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height. This group is termed "La Vittoria" in the catalogue.
8. Torso of a female figure, in wax, about 12 inches in height.
9. A mask in clay, partially baked, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.
10. An anatomical study, in wax, 5 inches in height, termed "Marsyas."
11. Two arms and two legs, in wax, from 6 to 8 inches in length, representing the anatomy of the muscles.
12. An anatomical figure, about a foot and a half in

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height, in wax, representing the bones and part of the integuments. These anatomical fragments are supposed, though we think on slight grounds, to have been preparatory studies for the statue of "David."

II. WORKS BY OTHER ARTISTS.

1. DONATELLO.

1. Model of a cow, in terra cotta.
2. Small bas-relief of St. John, in marble.

2. GIOVANNI DI BOLOGNA.

1. "Diana," a small figure in bronze.
2. Study in wax, about 6 inches in height, for the group of the Rape of the Sabines, now existing in marble in the Piazza del Gran Duca, in Florence.
3. "Hercules and Centaur," in wax, 8 inches in height.

3. RAFFAELLE D'URBINO.

1. Terra cotta model for the Jonah, executed by Lorenzotto.

4. LORENZINI.

Terra cotta sketch for one of the three figures on the tomb of Michael Angelo; it represents "Architecture."

5. FIAMMINGO.

1. Study in wax, about 4 inches in height, for the statue of Susanna, called also S. Martina, in the church of S. Maria, in Foro Trajano, at Rome.

6. SCHOOL OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

Recumbent male figure, in terra cotta, about a foot and a quarter in length. Besides these, there are five or six other objects of uncertain authorship, and of little importance.

We have carefully examined the works specified in the foregoing list, and have no hesitation in expressing our belief that of the models attributed to Michael Angelo, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, are genuine productions of that master, and that, in particular, Nos. 3, 5, and 6, are works of great excellence.

No. 2, though less important, bears also every mark of genuineness; nor does there seem to be any great reason to doubt that Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, are from the hand of the same great master; but for the most part they are too incomplete, or possess too little positive character, to enable us to speak of them with certainty.

No. 1. The study for "La Notte" is said to differ slightly from the marble statue in the position of the limbs; but it does not appear to us that the terra cotta bears any distinctive character of originality.

2. The terra cotta, representing a cow, attributed to Donatello, is probably a work of his time; but there is nothing in the taste or style in which it is executed to identify it as the production of Donatello. The same may be said of the small bas-relief of St. John attributed to this master.

3. The small bronze figure of Diana attributed to Gian di Bologna, is a reduced copy of the large bronze existing in Florence. Nos. 2 and 3 are, however, undoubtedly original studies by this master, and, though much mutilated, possess great excellence.

We have already spoken of the terra cotta model attributed by the Italian artists conjecturally to Sansovino, but, in the opinion of French critics, to which we subscribe, to be considered as the undoubted work of Raffaello. This judgment, it is not unimportant to notice, was unhesitatingly, and at the first glance, pronounced by one of us who happened to be the first to see the collection, and before learning to whom, either in Italy or France, the model had been attributed. And there can be no doubt about the beauty and excellence of this remarkable sketch. Every line of it seems to breathe the spirit of Raffaello; and it is precisely the sort of sketch which he, as a painter, was likely to have furnished, - beautiful in its conception, comparatively slight and unequal in execution, and, as it would seem, not very well adapted to fill the niche intended to receive it. In this last circumstance, indeed, we may perhaps trace the causes of the difference between the sketch and the finished work. According to the sketch, a greater depth would have been required than the niche allowed; to obviate this, the artist seems first to have tried the effect of cutting off the left foot and part of the leg, the want of which would not have been perceived when the statue was seen in front. These are wanting in the terra cotta. This plan being abandoned, the whole *pose* of the figure was modified, so as to bring its dimensions within the bounds with respect to depth which the position it was intended to occupy rendered necessary. The consequence of this change has been that the Raffaellesque character of form and attitude so strongly marked in the terra cotta has, to a great degree, evaporated in the marble of the Capella Chigi; and it may be safely affirmed that in this terra cotta we not only have the design for the Jonah, such as Raffaello intended it to be in its main

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characteristics, but in reality the only existing specimen of sculpture by his hand.

The remaining works in the collection may be passed without notice, with the exception, perhaps, of the small wax model by Fiammingo for the statue of Susanna, which possesses very considerable beauty.

With respect to extrinsic evidence of the genuineness of the works we have noticed, it must be at once stated that there is none whatever. From time immemorial they have been in the possession of the Gherardini, an ancient family of Florence, and, as has been stated, were, along with a large collection of drawings, until a few years ago, the property of an aged priest, but there are no documents to establish this statement.

Out of the thirty objects contained in the collection, it did not appear to us that more than ten or twelve were really desirable.

10th January 1854.

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